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THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

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THE KEDE: A RIVERAIN STATE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

By S. F. NADEL.

I. Introduction

THE Kyedye or Kede,[1] with whom this paper is concerned, are a section of the large Nupe tribe of Northern Nigeria, whose general culture and social organization I have described elsewhere.[2] The Kede have many cultural traits in common with their mother tribe; their kinship system is the same; they speak the dialect which is spoken to-day by the majority of the Nupe sub-tribes and has become the acknowledged language of the Emirate, Nupe 'proper'; they have also adopted the religion of Nupe kingdom, Islam. Yet combined with this cultural affinity we find certain marked divergencies. The Kede are a riverain group—the only purely riverain group among the various Nupe sub-tribes. Their economic pursuits and general social life centre round the river on which they live and from which they derive their livelihood. This means already that their social and cultural life must present certain features which are absent in Greater Nupe. Their political organization, moreover, contains certain distinctive and unusual traits—unusual even for Africa at large. It is for this unusual nature rather than for its relation to practical problems of African administration that I have chosen the political organization of this small Nigerian sub-tribe for the subject of this contribution.

II. Demography

The main body of the Kede lives to-day on the Rivers Niger and Kaduna between 8° 30′ and 9° 40′ North Latitude, inhabiting a narrow strip of land on both banks. The Kede share their territory with a number of other tribal sections of the Nupe, which lead a semi-riverain life, pursuing—unlike the Kede—agriculture

[1] The proper Nupe name is Kyedye. But the Hausa, Yoruba, and other neighbouring groups (as well as, to-day, Government officials) prefer the more easily pronounced Kede. We shall adopt, for the sake of simplicity, this latter name.

[2] See *Africa*, viii, 1935, and also my forthcoming book, *A Black Byzantium*.

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beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.

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political boundaries, came to lie in three different provinces and six different (modern) Emirates or Divisions.[1] However, we shall see later that this distribution of a comparatively small group over so many political divisions is not due entirely to the realignment of political boundaries. It is also a result of movements of Kede groups in recent times, after the political boundaries had been fixed by the present Government.

By far the largest section of the Kede lives on the left bank of the Niger and Kaduna, in Bida Emirate. In this area the Kede have also maintained their political status of a separate political unit, with their own chief as the administrative head. In all other areas the Kede communities are absorbed politically in the districts on whose territory they lie, and live under the local, non-Kede chiefs and district heads.[2] The modern political situation has not, however, obliterated the other features of their social life; the characteristics of their political organization, more specially, live on, though on a smaller scale, in the one area where it has been given official recognition. Although many of our political data will of necessity be derived from this one area, we may again take them to be representative of Kede country at large, and when speaking in the following of Kede, Kede culture and social system, we shall mean the group as a whole, disregarding the modern political subdivisions.

There exists, however, one subdivision of a different nature, deep-seated and of old standing, which we may not ignore. I have spoken so far simply of the Kede. But there exist in reality two Kede groups: the Kede *Tifin*, or upper-stream Kede, and the Kede *Tako*, or down-stream Kede, the boundary between the two groups lying roughly at Jebba Island (the two groups overlap for a short stretch north and south of Jebba).[3] Now, what I have said about the specific features of the Kede social and political system applies only to the down-stream group. The upper-stream Kede show none of the traits which give to the culture of the sister group

[1] The Kede on the right bank of the Niger belong now to Ilorin and Kabba Provinces, and to the Emirates, or political divisions, of Ilorin, Lafiagi, Patigi, and (in the south-west corner) Koton-Karifi. The Kede on the left bank of the Niger and on the River Kaduna belong to Niger Province (formerly Nupe Province) and to the Emirates of Bida, Agaie-Lapai, and Kontagora.

[2] In one place (Ogudu) a certain compromise has been effected, the head of the fairly numerous Kede community acting as a titled 'second-in-command' to the village chief.

[3] The upper-stream Kede are also called Kede *Gbede*, after the Nupe subtribe (Gbede or Gbedegi) with which they share their territory.

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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsoji* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

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trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.

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till their villages covered the Niger Valley between Eggan and Jebba. At the time when the first European travellers appeared in Nupe country, we find the Kede already firmly entrenched in this part of the Niger Valley. Now, of the ten main villages of the Kede which exist to-day only one represents an independent, purely Kede settlement—the Kede capital, Muregi. It is a well-built village, with solid houses of sun-dried mud bricks, each compound walled in in Nupe fashion, with a big mosque and an imposing chief's house. It is, as I have said, a pure Kede town, a town inhabited entirely by the 'ruling race'—*'u de talakazi a'*, say the Kede ('it contains no poor'—meaning persons belonging to the subject groups). All other Kede settlements, without exception, are built on or near the site of a village of 'original inhabitants'. In most cases the Kede settlement occupies the river bank itself, and the 'native' village the stretch of country immediately behind; in a few cases we find the Kede settlements on an island off the bank occupied by the 'native' village or on the opposite side of the river. The result is something like a twin-village, half 'native' and half Kede. The scene of Kede tradition, a tribal home and emigrant settlements, seems indeed visible in the present-day organization of Kede settlement, with its one all-Kede town and its many 'twin-villages' along the river valley.

The more recent history of Kede settlement remains true to this picture of a gradual territorial expansion. We know that towards the end of last century the Kede settled for the first time on the Kaduna River. Later, under the Royal Niger Company, the Kede were encouraged to extend their settlements still farther on Niger and Kaduna. It is easy to trace these new settlements, which were founded near the European trading posts and other places which had similarly gained commercial importance. Only some thirty years ago the Kede founded their latest 'colony'—on Jebba Island.

The villages differ greatly in appearance: some villages boast solidly built permanent houses, while others consist largely of more flimsy buildings, grass-walled huts, suggestive of temporary occupation rather than permanent settlements. The habitations of the Kede reflect the flexible, mobile nature of their system of settlement. The degree of permanence attempted in the buildings at the same time betrays the age of the settlement as well as its (past or present) importance as an economic or

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361 political centre. The Kede settlement at Raba is a typical instance
184 of the more solidly built settlement. It was founded about 1840, when Raba was the capital of Nupe Emirate. The first settlers were five men with their families from Muregi, who belonged to one 'house'; to-day the Kede colony at Raba (which now also possesses a Niger Company storehouse) numbers seven 'houses'.

The Kede settlement at Katcha is an example of the other, poorly built, type, which gives the impression as if the settlers had not yet found time, or had not yet quite decided, to build themselves permanent quarters. The present Kede settlement dates back to 1905–10, at which time a group of Kede who had settled previously at Eggan, on the main river, abandoned this colony for Katcha, attracted by the opportunities of the place. Katcha, on a tributary of the Niger, owed its rise to importance to the introduction of steamer traffic on the Niger and the building of the first Nigerian railway from Baro, through Katcha, to Minna. Its five or six 'houses' of original Kede settlers have now increased to seventeen.

Our list of Kede settlements would not be complete without the mention of the purely temporary riverside camps, meant to last for one season or a few weeks only, which the Kede put up in the larger villages where they are wont to stop on their journeys up and down the river. During the main trading season, Jebba, Patigi, Wuya, or Katcha are crowded with these lightly built shelters, grass-huts, tent-like structures of grass-matting or —crudest of all—the wattle-and-matting awnings of the canoes simply pulled ashore. Kede settlement has not yet come to a standstill. Places which are gaining in importance still attract new groups of immigrants; and the seasonal shelters in a busy trading centre may at any time be turned into permanent quarters, as, indeed, it has happened repeatedly in the course of time.

361 Reviewing the history of Kede settlement, we find its depen-
166 dence on economic factors fully confirmed. We may conceive of it as of a progressive realization of the dictates of the productive system of the country. The Kede, as we have seen, did not occupy new, uninhabited country, but settled in places where an existing population had already established a certain level of social and economic life. In the choice of places for settlement and in their subsequent development, the Kede were invariably guided by commercial considerations. They were, moreover, not satisfied

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with the position of immigrants who are dependent on the good-will of their hosts, but claimed with the territory in which to settle also the political rule over it. If they are thus not 'colonists' in the strict sense of the word, not caring for settlement in new, virgin country, they are 'colonizers' in a more special, political sense, being settlers, immigrants, and representatives of a ruling race in one.

Here a final point remains to be cleared up: the exact relation between the elastic territorial expansion of the tribe and the necessarily more inert and rigid expansion of political domination. From the history of modern Kede settlement we learn that there is a certain time lag between the first occupation of a new place by Kede immigrants (the nucleus stage of the seasonal camp) and its eventual rise to the status of a political outpost. The Kede, as a rule, attribute the founding of their various colonies to particular chiefs. The initiative taken by the Kede chief in the colonial enterprise refers both to the early growth and the final political incorporation of the new colony. He might himself send out settlers from Muregi to a new place which looked a likely centre for Kede activities (Raba is an instance of this), or he might direct settlers from other places to a promising new settlement (as was the case in Katcha). But not until a settlement was firmly established and numbered several families would he delegate an official representative of his to take charge of it, thus proclaiming the political incorporation of the new Kede dominion.

We learn, further, that Kede territorial expansion did not proceed step by step, in continuous stages, but rather in a series of leaps, which may leave gaps between outpost and outpost, or mother-country and new settlement. Thus there are 'uncolonized' spaces on the Kaduna River between Gbara and Wuya or Gbara and Muregi—that is, stretches of country with native villages which (unlike the interspersed *kintsoji* villages in the 'old' Kede country) have not been absorbed politically by the Kede. We may assume that the early growth of the Kede community followed the same line of development. If this was so, the compact political unit in the 'old' Kede country proves that political rule was later brought up to the new outpost, and the territorial gaps eventually absorbed in the extending political unit. To-day the firmly fixed boundaries of provinces and districts forbid, of course, a similar sequel to the founding of new settlements. The new economic

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development of the country, moreover, has attracted Kede emigration to places far outside the orbit of their political organization: thus at the busy trading-place on the confluence of Niger and Benue, Lokoja, a large and prosperous Kede colony has grown, which combines all the 'stages' of Kede settlement, permanent and semi-permanent houses in which Kede families have made their home as well as a large encampment on the river bank for the Kede canoemen from the north. But it seems that even in pre-British times the territorial expansion of the Kede had to leave certain 'gaps' in its network of settlements and political outposts. Thus the large Nupe town of Eggan on the right bank of the Niger, flanked to the north and south by (presumably old) Kede settlements, remained a powerful, independent political unit, placed directly under the King of Nupe. It is this characteristic scheme of Kede expansion which allows for territorial gaps and the founding of (at least temporarily) isolated outposts that justifies our speaking of Kede 'colonies' and 'colonization'.

V. Political Organization

The political system of the Kede corresponds in all important points to the concept of the State. On its small scale, it fulfils the essential conditions of State organization: its dominion is territorial and non-tribal (or inter-tribal); its administration is centralized; its machinery of government is monopolized by a special *ad hoc* appointed or selected body, which is separated from the rest of the population by certain social and economic privileges.[1] The first of these three features we have discussed already; as regards the second, we have learned that Muregi, the traditional home of the tribe, is at the same time the political centre of the country; and as regards the last point, we have seen that in a broad sense the Kede themselves represent, corporatively, the ruling group of the country. But among the Kede we find another, more precisely defined 'privileged group', in whose hands the government of the country is concentrated. This ruling group, in a narrow sense, consists of the Kede chief and his titled councillors and emissaries.

[1] With regard to this definition of the State, see *Africa*, vol. cit., and my forthcoming Nupe book. R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (1927) (chaps. iii and iv), recognizes territorial sovereignty and centralized authority as essential to the structure of the State; the factor of the special 'ruling group' has been elaborated by F. Oppenheimer, *The State* (1926).

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The Position of the Chief. The Kede chief, or *Kuta*, resides in Muregi. In his hands used to lie the ultimate decision on all matters concerning country and tribe as a whole—above all, war and the founding of new colonies. The *Kuta* was also the judicial head of his country. The larger part of taxes, duties, and other revenues used to flow into his private treasury. He was (and still is), finally, the official representative of his country *vis-à-vis* the overlords of Kede, the Emirs of Nupe. Impressive paraphernalia and forms of ceremonial serve to display the exalted position of the Kede chief, the most imposing perhaps being the enormous State canoe, propelled by twelve paddlers (two to three is the normal crew of the Kede canoes), in which the *Kuta* travels. The authority of the Kede chief rests in the main on three facts: first, a moral sanction of Kede chieftainship lies in its hereditary nature and the fact of its being derived, in a straight line, from a mythical first *Kuta*, who had been invested with the rule over the Kede by Tsoede himself, the ancestor-king and culture-hero of the Nupe. (We shall hear more of him later.) Another support of Kede chieftainship, of more practical order, lies in the overwhelmingly strong economic position of the Kede chief. His resources allow him to acquire a large fleet of canoes—not only the chief means of livelihood, but also the mainstay of all military action in this riverain country[1]—and to attach to his household a host of followers and henchmen. The position of the Kede chief is made finally secure by the fact that the most important political offices in the Kede State are allotted to his blood relations.

The 'Offices of State'. Political offices among the Kede fall into two categories. One comprises a small group of rank-holders, *ticiji* ('titled ones'), who reside in the capital and represent the councillors of the Kede chief. A second category comprises titled official emissaries of the *Kuta*, *egbaji* ('delegates'), who are in charge of the various Kede settlements and colonies. To these two groups of 'real' office-holders we must add a third group of what the Nupe call 'private' or 'household' ranks, which the Kede chief bestows on faithful and able followers. The majority of them live with the *Kuta* in Muregi, acting as his messengers, councillors of a lesser order, and such like; a few are entrusted with emissaryships.

[1] Laird and Oldfield (op. cit., ii, p. 279) mention that the Kede chief 'had twenty canoes of retinue'.

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The councillors of the *Kuta* number five ranks, three of which correspond to more or less specialized offices: the administration of Muregi town, the guardianship of the sacred relics of Tsoede, and—in pre-British times—the leadership of military expeditions. In modern Kede, the District *Alkali*, the Mohammedan judge appointed by the Bida Native Administration for the District, is virtually a member of the chief's council in the same capacity of a 'departmental' official. With the exception of this last office, the ranks of the chief's councillors are hereditary and 'belong' to the various families which have held the ranks from times immemorial. The succession to a vacant office is not, however, automatic, but admits of a certain latitude, as for every vacancy there are bound to be several candidates of approximately equal seniority and equal claim. In the appointment of a new rank-holder by the chief and his councillors, due weight is given to the reputation of the candidate, his experience, intelligence, and economic success (as canoeman or river-trader). The position of a councillor appears to have carried no regular emoluments with it, except in the case of the official in charge of the town administration and thus the collection of taxes in Muregi. Occasional gifts from the chief and a share in the booty made on raids and warlike expeditions constituted their official income.

The rank list of the 'delegates' is both larger and more flexible than that of the councillors. It is frequently altered, increased, or decreased, according to the demands of administration. The members of this order of ranks are all recruited from the family of the *Kuta*. Their ranks are graded, and follow a strict system of precedence and promotion. Every promotion means a larger measure of power and influence, for it goes hand in hand with transfer to another, more important, and also more lucrative post. A new as yet untitled member of the chief's kin will as a rule be appointed to one of the lower ranks; the higher ranks and more responsible offices can only be reached by gradual promotion. Promotion and first appointment are, again, decided by the chief in consultation with the other tribal notables; here, however, the personal preferences of the electors count more than rigorous qualifications: in this system of ranks based on promotion, long experience is not regarded as a condition for a lower appointment, nor already achieved economic success for a rise in rank which carries with it increased economic benefits.

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Succession to Chieftainship. Here we must turn back to the position of the Kede chief and the question of succession to Kede chieftainship. For the highest in the series of promotion which we have just been discussing, the ultimate promotion open to members of the chief's family, is promotion to chieftainship. The rank next to the chief's, *Egba* (here meaning 'deputy'), is in fact regarded as the rank of an 'heir apparent', and is as a rule held by the most senior among the titled relatives of the chief, his younger brother, or elder brother's son. Succession to chieftainship, more rigid than succession to the other political offices, thus allows the chief-to-be to consolidate his position in advance of his actual appointment. The tribal notables exercise a certain indirect influence: for in every one of the repeated routine decisions on the promotion of a 'delegate' they already decide to some degree his future chances as a candidate for chieftainship. But then, the ruling chief is himself one of the 'electors' and can easily turn the decision in favour of the candidate whom he supports.[1] Here becomes clear what I have said above about the kinship relation between the Kede chief and his 'delegates' tending to strengthen the position of the chief. The mere tie of kinship between them may conceivably prove a weak and unreliable support of his authority; but the fact that the delegates remain dependent on the favour of the chief for their promotion and political career in general turns it into a bulwark of chiefly power.

With 'councillors' and 'delegates' both dependent upon his goodwill, the Kede chief exercised an almost absolute authority—more absolute, I may add, than any other chief of Nupe. Repeated promotion and transfer, all decided in the capital, tied the delegates closely to Muregi and prevented them from making for themselves too independent a position in their temporary dominions. The 'absolute' power of the Kede chief thus appears as a necessary element in the control of this mobile political system which, with its scattered outposts and colonies, yet depended so much on smooth co-operation and concerted action. The weakness of the system lay in the fact that it allowed no legitimate check on the power of the chief. A more equitable balance of power could only be achieved by illegitimate means—that is, by feuds and

[1] It is significant, in this connexion, that the present *Kuta* introduced a new rank for his son when the list of traditional ranks was exhausted (see the chart of Kede ranks).

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factional splits within the hereditary ruling class. The recent history of the Kede contains indeed evidence of such rivalry between the Kede chief and his officers of State, or between different claimants to Kede rulership, and the ensuing division of the country into rival factions.[1] Attachment to one of the rival factions is also the only means by which the subject classes, the commoners with no rank and office, could exercise an indirect influence upon the political management of their country.

Administration of the 'Colonies'. The following chart illustrates the different grades in the rank list of Kede delegates. The ranks are given in order of precedence, each rank together with the district to which its holder is posted. The last five ranks on the list do not belong to members of the chief's family, but to that group of 'household' ranks which are also occasionally vested with emissaryships.

Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Egba	Elder brother's son (classific.)	Gbara	Kpatagban (right bank)
Sonfara	Son	Lives in Muregi, no emissaryship	(A newly introduced rank)
Kofiẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Raba	Raba
Ekpẽ	Younger brother (classific.)	Kpacefu	—
Tswadiya	Younger brother	Ketsogi	Ketsogi
Lefiti	Younger brother of *Egba*	Muregi, no emissaryship	Kpacefu
Liman Gyedwa	Distant relation	,,	Kpasha (right bank)
Tswadyagi	,,	,,	Kpasha

[1] Factional splits of this kind were occasionally utilized and fostered by outside Powers. Thus the Royal Niger Company supported an *Egba* in whom they found a valuable ally against the ruling *Kuta*, promising the former the chieftainship in return for the support of his faction. And once or twice the Emirs of Nupe backed the rival claimant of Kede chieftainship against the 'official' candidate.

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Rank	*Relation to Kuta*	*Posted to at present*	*Posted to formerly*
Sodi	Younger brother	Katcha (unofficially)	Muregi, no emissaryship
Sheshi Kuta	Household-rank	Katcha	Eggan (right bank)
Tsowa Kuta	"	Muregi, no emissaryship	Egbagi (right bank)
Capa Kuta	"	"	Wunangi
Mijindadi Kuta	"	Jebba	Buka

The list shows that the assignment of posts to political ranks has undergone certain changes. They were due partly to the re-alignment of modern administrative divisions, which placed some of the former Kede areas outside of present-day Kede country (e.g. the Kede settlements on the right bank of the Niger). But partly also to changes in the economic and political importance of certain places and the corresponding change in their official 'appreciation'. Jebba and Katcha are illuminating examples. In Jebba we find a man of comparatively low rank in charge of the Kede community. He was posted there when Jebba was only just beginning to become the important place it is to-day. The *Mijindadi* is to-day a very old man, almost blind, and only nominally in charge of the 'colony'; he is generally expected to be succeeded by a high rank-holder whose rank would do justice to the importance of present-day Jebba. Katcha is, officially, in charge of the *Sheshi Kuta*, another 'household' rank; he is, however, unofficially assisted in his work by the *Sodi*, a relation of the *Kuta*, who also lives in Katcha and, in fact, only waits till this important Kede community will be handed to him as to the more suitable representative of the *Kuta*.

The dominion of the delegate varies in extent and composition. His district (especially if he resides in one of the twin-villages) may comprise both tribal groups, Kede and non-Kede; or the boundary of his dominion may be drawn round the Kede settlement, while the 'native' village (which would be some distance from the Kede settlement or on the bank if the latter is on an island) belongs to the country and political district inland. In

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either case, the dominion of the Kede delegate would stretch some way up and down the river, comprising hamlets and villages on (formerly) both banks. The 'native' villagers live under their own chief and elders, and are on the whole left to themselves, except for the political obligations towards the Kede rulers. In the carrying out of these obligations (to be examined presently), village chief and elders become mere subordinates of the Kede government. The Kede families, on the other hand, which live in the district of the delegate are his subjects in a different sense. They too have their obligations towards the government which he represents. But they share to some extent his privileged official position *vis-à-vis* the 'natives' of the country. The family heads of these Kede families assume certain titles in Nupe fashion, which are to mark them as 'elders' of their community. In this case, however, these are not the usual village ranks, nor are they *tici nya Kuta* ('ranks of the *Kuta*'), but are of the order of personal or 'household' ranks, which the Kede delegate may confer upon the family heads in 'his' town.

The official duties of the delegate relate to the three main concerns of Kede administration. He is charged with the collection of taxes on behalf of the Kede chief, the maintenance of law and order in the districts, and he finally acts as the agent of the chief in all matters requiring concerted action of the tribe as a whole. The first two duties have undergone but comparatively minor changes under modern administration. The last duty, the most important aspect of which used to be contribution to the fighting expeditions of the tribe, is reduced to-day to such relatively irrelevant activities as the arrangement of the periodical tours of inspection through Kede country of the Kede chief or the District Officer.

Taxation. The present system of taxation is based on an income tax on sliding scale, assessed among the Kede on the basis of the number of canoes owned. The tax is collected locally by the official Village Head, and is then transmitted by the District Head to the Native Administration Treasury in Bida. For Kede District read *delegate* for Village Head (a certain number of Kede 'delegates' having been made Village Heads under the Native Administration), and *Kuta* for District Head—in all other respects taxation among the Kede is the same as in the inland districts of the Emirate. This was not so in pre-British times. The *kintsozi* villages,

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like the other inland villages of Nupe, paid a certain annual money tax, assessed per village, which was collected by the *Kuta* and his delegates on behalf of the King of Nupe. The tax which the Kede themselves paid, on the other hand, was of two kinds: first, there was the tax proper, paid locally, at the village to which one belongs. It was an income tax in the modern sense, consisting in a percentage of the money income of every canoe-owner (i.e. profits from trade and transport). Second, there was the *albarka* (lit. 'blessing'), a tribute voluntary but in name, which canoe-owners were expected to pay to the delegates at whose place they were stopping and doing business. The tribute varied in amount: in Jebba it amounted to a 10 per cent., in Muregi to a 20 per cent. duty on all goods bought and sold. Failure to pay meant forfeiting the permission to call and trade in the district. The delegate returned to the *Kuta* half of his revenue from the tax proper, and one-fifth of the revenue from the *albarka*. The *Kuta*, in turn, handed about one-fifth of his total tax revenue (including tax on his private trade and canoe profits) to the *Etsu* in Bida.

Jurisdiction. The modern system provides for a professional Mohammedan judge (*Alkali*), who holds court in Muregi, and to whom all legal cases from the district have to be submitted. Native Administration police assist him on the executive side. The courts in the capital, Bida, are higher courts and courts of appeal for Kede as for all other districts of the Emirate. Under the new system, chief and delegate are allowed no judicial and only a limited executive authority.

In pre-British Nupe the maintenance of law and order devolved in different degree upon all existing political authorities, the local delegate, the Kede chief, and the Emir of Nupe, in accordance with the nature of the offence. The local delegate could only deal with very minor offences of the kind which involves no restitution and only domestic punishment, if any. All other aspects of public security were regarded as being of direct concern to the State—Kede or Nupe. Even the smallest theft came before the *Kuta* in Muregi; adultery, litigation about bride-price or inheritance similarly fell under his jurisdiction. Certain major crimes, on the other hand, were under the jurisdiction of the King of Nupe himself. The list of these 'crimes of the king' (as they are still called) comprises: highway robbery (including robbery on the river

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634 693 highways of the country), homicide, seduction, and the crime *lèse majesté* ('abuse of the king', in Nupe phraseology). In securing a criminal, the *Kuta's* own men would act as a police force; if the crime came under the heading of a 'king's crime' the same police force would take the prisoner to the capital, where judgement would then be passed upon him by the king and his councillors.

634 693 We can say that with the exception of offences against kinship rules (e.g. the incest taboo) and offences against religious rules—the various religious rules of the *kintsozi* which were of no concern to the Kede rulers—no serious breach of established rules of conduct was left to private settlement or to the informal sanctions of 'public opinion'. The comprehensiveness of the claims of the Kede State to enforce conduct within its boundaries must yet admit of one significant limitation: the Kede must surrender jurisdiction over certain major crimes committed in their territory to their overlords; they must, in other words, agree to a limitation of their autonomy in the interest of the Emirate at large. We shall presently encounter another aspect of the maintenance of 'law and order' in which the prerogative of the Kede chief must give way to that of the central government of the country, yet in which the relation between the two is, in the very nature of things, much less clearly defined: the territorial rights of the various subject groups which are united under Nupe rule.

634 423 *Territorial Rights.* The Kede, as the overlords of the *kintsozi*, guarantee to their own subject groups certain corporate territorial rights. The semi-riverain *kintsozi*, as we have seen, derive their livelihood to a large extent from fishing in the backwaters and creeks of the River Niger. The fishing rights of the different *kintsozi* villages were upheld by the Kede rulers and enforced if need arose by the full military power at their disposal. Nupe kingdom equally guaranteed corporate territorial rights to its various subject groups. The Kede, as one of these subject groups, enjoyed these territorial rights with respect to their undisturbed possession of the whole riverain area.

634 423 578 But the presence of a strong and expanding group like the Kede in the political framework of the Nupe State must invite conflicts over the territorial rights of other subject groups of Nupe which are neighbours of the Kede in the river area. As the more recent history of Nupe shows, conflicts of this kind have frequently

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arisen. Their occurrence or avoidance is clearly bound up with the interpretation put on Kede political autonomy—a point which we will discuss under a separate heading.

VI. The Claim to Autonomy

Let me say, first, that the administration of Kede country presents an exact analogy to the administration of Nupe kingdom. Emissaries from the capital, delegates recruited from the ruling house, are in charge of the administrative districts of the Emirate as they are of the district of Kede country. This analogy reflects the analogous political evolution in both countries: the rise to power of a small group over a large country with heterogeneous population. The only exception from this rule of administering the districts of the Emirate through royal delegates is Kede country itself, which remained under its own chief, who acted as the representative of the *Etsu* Nupe. Even for this exception there is a parallel to be found in Kede organization: the emissary system did not apply to the area of the upper-stream Kede. Their whole area was regarded as one sub-district of Kede country and was placed in charge, not of an emissary from Muregi, but of one of their own chiefs, the village chief of Bele, their southernmost settlement. The explanation for this privileged position of the two groups, the Kede *Tifin* under Kede and the Kede under Nupe, is most probably the same—namely, that their rulers would have found it difficult to control themselves effectively the territory of these subject communities: the Kede the country of the upper-stream group, which was not easy to reach with their big canoes (note that they made the chief in the place farthest down-stream the 'deputy' for the whole group), and the Nupe kings the whole river area.

To the down-stream Kede their autonomous position in Nupe Emirate is a sacred trust, dating back to their first chief who received, with the chieftainship of Kede, the 'Rule over the Water' from the mythical Tsoede. The Kede chiefs still style themselves *Etsu nya nuwã* ('King of the Water'), and, as their history shows, have always taken this title very literally. It meant to them more than merely the formal concession of assigning to a Kede chief duties normally discharged by a royal delegate, and they have in the past frequently attempted to acquire a larger

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measure of independence in taxation, jurisdiction, and political management in general.[1]

In this connexion, we must point out an important development in the history of Nupe kingdom, which in turn greatly affected Kede history. The royal dynasty of Nupe, which traced its origin back to the mythical Tsoede, was in power till the earlier half of last century, when Nupe kingdom, like most of the Native states in Northern Nigeria, fell under the rule of Emirs of Fulani stock who had conquered the country and deposed the indigenous kings. We have no data on the relation between Kede autonomy and the Nupe State under the old dynasty. But it is certain that under Fulani rule conflicts constantly arose, partly perhaps because the Kede (like many other Nupe sections) resented the alien rule, but to a large extent certainly because the Fulani kings, much more than the Nupe rulers before them, had to curb in their own interest the autonomous leanings of their Kede vassals. The Fulani, whose wars at that time were directed chiefly against tribes in the south, could not afford to let an all too independent section control the river—the southern boundary and at the same time the vital artery of trade and traffic of the country. Slave trade, the economic mainstay of the pre-British rulers of central Nigeria, traffic in arms and powder, and troop transports for their military expeditions, all had to cross the River Niger on Kede territory.[2] The Fulani overlords enforced their sovereignty in a number of wars and punitive expeditions, in the course of which (if the reports are true) hundreds were killed, thousands of Kede sold as slaves by the victorious Fulani, Kede notables executed in Bida, and whole districts of Kede country devastated. A typical instance is the Katcha War—the answer of the Fulani to the first attempt of

[1] There exists certain evidence to show that the Kede chiefs succeeded in enlarging their judicial power at the cost of their overlords and usurped a certain judicial machinery of the Nupe State which had evolved in the river area. To-day, at any rate, the Kede claim that this judicial machinery was under the authority of the *Kuta*, while other, non-Kede, informants state that it represented entirely a prerogative of the kings of Nupe. I am referring to the *Ledu* (lit. prison) villages on the banks of the Niger, which were so called because they served as prisons and places of execution for criminals convicted, by the king's court, of a 'crime of the king'. I have described this system and the attempts of the Kede to claim it as their own in *Man* (1935), 143.

[2] The importance, for example, of Raba as a river port for slave traffic to the south is pointed out by Lander (*Journal of an Expedition* (1832), ii, p. 298). Laird and Oldfield speak of 600 Kede canoes, 'all of which may be employed for Ful troops to cross the Niger on war expeditions' (op. cit., ii, p. 315).

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the Kede to force the tributary of the Niger on which Katcha is situated and to occupy the town. The people of Katcha, under allegiance to Bida, claimed protection for their territorial rights from the central government. The Kede were routed by a Fulani army, and the political rights of the Katcha people restored.[1]

The feud between the Kede and the Emirs of Bida, and, above all, the strategic position in the defence of the kingdom which the river tribe occupied, was utilized in the Royal Niger Company campaign against Bida in 1897. With promises of political autonomy to the tribe and the chieftainship to the ambitious nephew of the ruling *Kuta*, Sir William Wallace, the commanding officer of the Niger Company troops, secured the support of the Kede. Their canoe fleet was placed under the command of a gunboat and massed on the river south of Bida; with their help, the relieving force of the Nupe, which at the time was engaged in a war in the south, was cut off and Bida captured. The Kede received the promised reward and were granted semi-autonomy, being made responsible directly to the British Administration instead of to their former overlords, the Emirs of Bida.

The political status of the Kede was later changed again. The *Kuta* lost a considerable portion of his territory when the new provinces and divisions were mapped out (1900–1905). At the same time, his autonomous position was curtailed, and Kede country placed again under Bida. A last element of autonomy is preserved in the regulation that the District Headship of Kede District should remain vested in the Kede chief.

The adoption of this curtailed autonomy for the purposes of modern government has not been an unqualified success. Administrative officers have had cause to complain of the declining authority of the Kede chief. The more evident supports of Kede chieftainship—the dynastic title, the privileged economic position of the chief (a comparatively high salary having taken the place of the former share in taxes and tributes), and his control over the officials of his State—have not been affected so fundamentally

[1] This first attempt was carried out in the early days of the Royal Niger Company. The second, successful, attempt of the Kede to gain a foothold in the Katcha River was carried out under an administration favourably disposed towards Kede expansion, and led to the peaceful occupation of the riverside at Katcha mentioned previously. This 'peaceful penetration', however, is hardly less resented by the Katcha people, who have lost through it their formerly undisturbed fishing grounds.

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634 178 by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

634 565 563 The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565 563

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 182

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *kintsoji* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.

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examination of the political organization has revealed one such machinery: the machinery of coercion. We must ask now how far other, non-political, forms of integration lend their support, or possibly are made to lend it, to political unification. We can distinguish three types of such supporting integrative agencies: (1) integration through actual co-operation between the sections of the population; (2) integration in the spiritual sphere—in other words, through ideologies teaching or preaching unity; (3) integration based on both. Instances of the first type are economic co-operation and community life, of the second, tradition and mythology, and of the third, religious practice.

VIII. Integrative Mechanisms

Economic Co-operation and Community Life. The propinquity of the Kede and *kintsoʒi* settlements, combined with the difference in their productive system, invites a certain measure of co-operation in the economic field. The Kede buy farm-produce from their peasant neighbours, who, in turn, use to some extent Kede transport to dispose of their surplus on the large river markets. This co-operation is by no means exclusive and does not lead to complete dependence upon each other. The peasants also sell some of their farm-produce inland or take their fish directly, on their own canoes, to riverside markets; similarly the Kede buy a certain amount of their food on the various outside markets which they visit on their river voyages.

In their community life, the two groups hardly achieve a more intensive, or less casual, co-operation. The difference in occupation and in the main interests of their lives is not balanced by any other strong ties. The young folk of the Kede and *kintsoʒi* frequently join in each other's dances; here and there friendships are struck between individuals from the two groups. But apart from these contacts the two sections keep to themselves. The age-grade associations do not stretch across the tribal boundary and, above all, there is almost no inter-marriage: the *kintsoʒi* arrange their marriages with their tribal relations inland, and the Kede marry among themselves.[1] In these marriages between Kede villages distance plays no part, which is rather significant, for the (inland) Nupe generally dislike marriages between distant places.

[1] This is true of all the older Kede settlements; in the more recent settlements (e.g. Katcha) I found a few cases of inter-marriage with the *kintsoʒi*.

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The various Kede groups are thus all related, not only, rather vaguely, by common descent, being all emigrants of common stock, but also very concretely, by repeated inter-marriage. Personal contact between fellow tribesmen, friends, and relations among the Kede, whatever the distance of their habitations, is maintained by occasional visits, and revived regularly every trading season, when the Kede canoes travel from place to place. Finally, the solidarity of the Kede community is strengthened periodically, when new groups of immigrants come out from 'home' to join fellow tribesmen who have emigrated earlier in their 'colony'.

Tradition and Mythology. The Kede share their traditions with their mother tribe, and, like the Nupe, trace their origin back to the mythical Tsoede or Edegi, of whom we have heard already (see p. 175). This Tsoede is said to have been a Nupe man who lived about 1400, and who was sent as slave to Idah, to which country Nupe was tributary at that time. He won the favour of the King of Idah, so much so that he evoked the jealousy of the sons of the king, and eventually had to flee the country. He set out in a bronze canoe, loaded with gifts from the king and manned by other Nupe slaves, to return to his country and to make himself king there, the rule of Nupe having been the King of Idah's parting gift to his favourite. On his flight to Nupe, Tsoede was helped by two men whom he met on the river—one sitting on a stone in midstream (*kuta*),[1] and one fishing with a fish trap (*ekpā*). When Tsoede established himself as King of Nupe he rewarded these two men by making them chief over the whole river and its tribes (*Kuta*), and a high rank-holder in the new river State (*Ekpā*), respectively.[2] These men were the ancestors of the present Kede, and the first to exercise the 'Rule over the Water', which has remained in the possession of the Kede since.

It clearly does not come within the compass of the present study to examine how far these legendary data might contain a kernel of historical truth. Their importance to us lies rather in the sociological significance of the 'truth' which they announce—that

[1] *Kuta*, stone, seems to be an old form of Nupe; it occurs in two obsolete Nupe dialects, and also in Gbari, a related language. The modern Nupe word for stone is *tahū* (the syllables of *kuta* reversed).

[2] The Nupe are very fond of such puns. There exists another version of this legend which derives the title *Kuta* from the fact that the man on the stone was wearing two gowns 'on top of each other'—in Nupe, *ku ta dagi*.

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is, in the influence upon actual social life which the belief in this 'truth' entails. The Kede tradition of origin, as we have seen, concerns itself above all with the beginnings of the political history of the tribe. In the fashion of such myths of origin, it anchors the existing system in a dim past, which, by its very remoteness and its supernatural and sacred associations, endows the present with an immensely convincing validity. The Kede tradition of origin ranges its strongest spiritual support behind what we now recognize to be the two fundamental features of their political system: the fact that the extent of Kede rule is defined on the basis of locality, and not tribe, and the fact that, within the larger political unit of Nupe kingdom, the Kede claim a semi-autonomous position. Let me emphasize that the knowledge of this tradition is not limited to the Kede, but is common to all Nupe sections, and among them the various *kintsozi* groups. The common possession of the myth represents a spiritual link of utmost importance: for with the myth the subjects of the Kede also accept the system which it is meant to guarantee—the overlordship of the Kede.

Religion. As I have mentioned, the Kede are to-day Mohammedans—very eager Mohammedans, in fact. In many settlements you will find *mallams* teaching the Koran to boys and adults, often pupils who are able to attend the classes only when their travels happen to take them to this place and allow them a short sojourn. The *kintsozi*, on the other hand, are still largely pagans. Moreover, against the solid religious unity of the Kede, the *kintsozi* show a certain diversity of religious rites and beliefs, which reflects the composite nature of this group.[1] However, there exist two rituals, both essentially river rituals, which are common to all the semi-riverain groups, and a third ritual, linked with the memory of Tsoede, which exists in all the larger riverain (and partly also inland) villages of Nupe. The first of these rituals is the *Nddduma* (the Nupe name for the River Niger), an annual sacrifice to the spirits of the river, performed in all the different river villages

[1] We cannot say what the religious situation in the river valley has been in the earlier periods of Nupe history. The probability is that the Kede, as most Nupe sub-tribes, possessed certain special rites and beliefs, which were not shared by the other tribal groups. The characteristic difference between Kede and *kintsozi* to-day, between a solid religious unit on one side and a heterogeneous religious group on the other, would thus have been equally marked in the pre-Islamic era.

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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsɨ*, a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Nddduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Nddduma* rituals, the *Nddduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Nddduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsɨ* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsoʒi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsoʒi* another, spiritual, dependence.

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634 182 *Conclusions.* We may say then, in conclusion, that economic co-operation and community life only underline the political and tribal divisions which cut across Kede society. As integrative forces which could foster a solidarity pertaining to the political system at large, they fail. Only the ideological influences, myth and religion, succeed in this. They anchor the external political unit in more deeply rooted interests and sentiments. They add to political coercion the more subtle persuasion of supernatural arguments, of beliefs in the necessity and fore-ordination of the existing system.

634 177 182 I have been using the present tense with some liberty. It was applied correctly if we are thinking of the last ten or fifteen years, but inaccurately if we consider the immediate present and, above all, the future. The rite of the *Chain of Tsoede* is still performed annually, in completely Mohammedanized Muregi. The bull sacrifice at the *Ketsá* was performed when the present *Kuta* succeeded to the chieftainship; whether it will be repeated for his successor is open to doubt. The *Ndáduma*, at any rate, although still existing as a local rite, is no longer carried out by the Kede chief. We have spoken before of the decline of authority of the Kede chief. It may seem surprising that a chieftainship which had been forced to give up most of the qualities from which it formerly drew its strength should so easily discard these 'binding forces' of religion. The explanation lies, again, in the changed conception of Kede chieftainship. Kede rule has exchanged its dynamic and expanding nature for the secure, aquiescent authority under the Pax Britannica. It can dispense with the binding forces of religion, which used to uphold the autocratic rulership of a small minority; it can, above all, afford to discontinue a practice which, to the Mohammedan chiefs of Kede country, appears as a concession to their less enlightened subjects. Kede rule has thus paradoxically weakened itself in its new-found security. And in this the chiefs of Kede do not stand alone; this paradox is, I believe, a not uncommon feature of modern, static, Government-backed chieftainship in Africa.

The incipient dissolution of the 'binding force' of religion in the Kede State is only following in the wake of the general dissolution of the solidarity which it was meant to uphold. The economic development of the country led, as we have seen, to an extensive co-operation with outside groups and to the founding of colonies

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in areas to which political rule could never be expected to follow. Common interests and culture, community life, intermarriage stretch as far as these outposts. Moreover, cultural assimilation and intensified contact have removed some of the barriers which formerly separated the Kede from neighbouring groups. The facts of common culture, economic co-operation, and community life thus no longer converge to cement the solidarity of a ruling group, but merely outline the much vaguer unit of a scattered ethnic group which has abandoned all claims to political self-realization.

IX. The Evolution of the Kede State

Our examination of the Kede State and its history does neither support nor refute the theory of the origin of the State which, accepted to-day by many students of society, derives every State organization from an original invasion and eventual conquest of one ethnic group by another.[1] Our data have shown political domination of one ethnic group by another to be a factor of paramount importance; they also revealed the occurrence of clash and conquest—though not on the comprehensive scale implied in this theory of the State; but they do not prove an original group invasion, beyond that which we must relegate to the era of mythical and thus unverifiable events. Our data can, in fact, also be taken as evidence for an 'internal diversification'[2] and a gradual emergence to political supremacy of one out of a number of ethnic groups.

Our data relating to Kede expansion in recent times, on the other hand, tend to confirm another sociological theory which concerns itself with social origins—namely, the theory which holds that migration and colonization are never a result of over-population, but rather an expression of that 'spirit of hope' and 'enterprise' which is absent in countries with over-population.[3] Can we accept this description of the growing Kede society as a final statement? Is the emergence of a tribal section to a dominant political role fully explained by this reference to psychological characteristics?

Our analysis of Kede political organization has emphasized a somewhat different aspect; it outlined the political system in its

[1] See F. Oppenheimer, op. cit.
[2] R. Lowie, op. cit., p. 40.
[3] A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem* (1922), pp. 299 ff.

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dependence on economic factors and, tied up with them, environmental conditions. The impetus to colonization and expansion, as we saw it, was already implied in the way in which the people gain their livelihood. We can render this argument even more conclusive; the cultural situation in the river valley itself offers us the comparative material from which to draw our deductions. We remember the upper-stream Kede, who, neighbours, fellow tribesmen and in many details of culture close relations of the down-stream Kede, yet do not share their political achievements—and also do not share their productive system and economic life in general. We can even go further and point to the environmental factors on which the economic system of the Kede in turn depends. The environment in which the upper-stream Kede live indeed forbids a development of river trade and traffic similar to that evolved by the sister group. The river in their area is narrow, barred in several places by rapids and rocky, frequently dangerous, passages, and generally impassable during half the year. On its banks there are few settlements, and the hinterland is thinly populated, inhabited largely by comparatively poor and backward groups. Hold against this the down-stream country: a broad river, navigable all the year round, the banks covered with numerous villages and the hinterland a rich, populous country with highly developed trades and crafts.

It will have been seen that I am speaking here of environment in a rather wide sense, including, beside the physical constellation of the country, also such factors as distribution of population and the existence of a certain type of civilization. Methodologically, these facts stand in the same category as physical environment proper. True, they are essentially historical facts, representing the results of various historical developments. These developments themselves, however, are beyond our line of vision; their results—the fact that the Kede area happens to lie in the centre of a rich and powerful kingdom—are to us 'unique events' in the phraseology of the historian, extraneous factors of chance, which, like environmental facts, we have to accept as ultimate data.

Let me admit that this causal chain, environmental conditions—economic enterprise—political system, is not fully conclusive. It is weakened by another aspect of our comparative evidence—namely, the fact that the *kintsogi*, who are also close neighbours and tribal relations of the down-stream Kede, and who share with

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them the same 'stimulating' environment, appear to have remained unresponsive to it. I have no explanation to give. Does this mean, then, that we have to fall back on the psychological interpretation of the kind quoted above? 634 121

But the environmental and economic 'determinism' which these conclusions have put forward was not meant to exclude completely the contribution of psychological factors—that is, the social motive power that may lie in the temperamental and general psychological dispositions typical of a group. Nor was it intended to minimize the decisive part that enterprising and far-seeing individuals must have played in the creation of the Kede State. The river colonization was undoubtedly the work of a people fully deserving the attributes 'adventurous', 'courageous', or 'possessed of a spirit of enterprise'; it must also have been closely bound up with the leadership of certain outstanding individuals: think of the man who was responsible for the Kede throwing in their lot with the British, or the Kede chiefs who so successfully utilized the encouragement of the Niger Company for the expansion of their country. But two facts must be borne in mind when defending this psychological and 'individualistic' theory of social origins. First, the psychological characteristics which might be made responsible for the achievements of the group are not *racially* determined (i.e. by heredity)—the dissimilar social system of the upper-stream Kede proves this to the full; they remain an expression of, and a perfect adjustment to, environmental conditions. And, second, these psychological characteristics do not reflect the effectiveness of some spontaneous, as it were, self-contained, psychological force, but are fostered and formed planfully by the existing social system and its cultural demands, to which the individuals, generation after generation, learn to adjust themselves. How much in the gradual social development of the Kede State was due to the selective effects of environment, and how much to the spontaneous actions of exceptionally gifted individuals who, at one point of Kede history, may have shown their people a new way of life, is one of these questions of social origins to which, again, we have no answer.

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[Information concerning the chief of the Kede sub-tribe has been placed in category 634. --Analyst]